

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 AMMAN 00420 141436Z
ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
-----016353 141437Z /45

P R 141344Z JAN 78
FM AMEMBASSY AMMAN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4657
INFO AMEMBASSY ALGIERS
USINT BAGHDAD
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY RABAT
AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

S E C R E T AMMAN 0420

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1
TAGS: PGOV, PEPR, JO, AG, XG
SUBJECT: BOUMEDIENE VISIT TO AMMAN

1. I SAW HUSSEIN BRIEFLY PRIVATELY AFTER CODEL
ZABLOCKI TALK WITH HIM EVENING JANUARY 12 AND HE
GAVE ME FOLLOWING POINTS ON BOUMEDINENE VISIT TO AMMAN:

A) VISIT WAS GOOD, BOUMEDIENE MADE GOOD IMPRESSION
AND KING WAS PLEASED BY VISIBLE CHANGE HE SAW IN
ALGERIAN LEADER BETWEEN ARRIVAL AND HIS DEPARTURE
LESS THAN 8 HOURS LATER FOR DAMASCUS;

B) ALGERIAN ASKED WHAT SADAT'S PLAN WAS, IMPLYING
THAT HUSSEIN OF ALL PEOPLE MUST BE PRIVY TO WHAT SADAT,
THE U.S. AND ISRAEL HAD WORKED OUT--I.E., SADAT
WOULD NOT HAVE DONE ALL THIS WITHOUT KNOWING THE
OUTCOME. HUSSEIN ANSWERED, "I'M DAMNED IF I KNOW.

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SADAT SAID HE WENT INTO HIS INITIATIVE NOT BEING
AT ALL CERTAIN OF THE OUTCOME;"

C) BOUMEDIENE, HUSSEIN SAID IN RESPONSE TO A
QUESTION, BELIEVES, LIKE THE SYRIANS, THAT THERE IS
A GIANT U.S., ISRAELI, EGYPTIAN PLOT AFOOT TO GET
EGYPT OUT OF CONFRONTATION AND CREATE A NEW

MIDDLE EAST AXIS;

D) BOUMEDIENE SAID HE IS CONTINUING TO WORK FOR SYRIAN-IRAQI RAPPROACHMENT. HUSSEIN SAID WITHOUT MUCH CONVICTION THAT HE TOLD THE ALGERIAN IT WAS ALRIGHT WITH HIM TO DO SO;

E) IRAQIS TOLD BOUMEDIENE THAT THEY WERE NOT GOING TO CHANGE ON FUNDAMENTALS ACCORDING TO HUSSEIN. THE IRAQIS SAID SYRIA OBVIOUSLY NEEDS THEM MORE THAN THEY NEED SYRIA, SO WHY CHANGE? HUSSEIN SUSPECTS SOMETHING MORE IS GOING ON SINCE BOUTEFLIKA WENT BACK TO BAGHDAD FROM DAMASCUS. HUSSEIN ALSO SAID HE BELIEVES (GAVE NO EVIDENCE) THAT SYRIA AND IRAQ HAVE RESUMED SOME SORT OF DIRECT CONTACTS;

F) ON MIDDLE EAST PEACE, BOUMEDIENE TOLD HUSSEIN HE WANTED TO GUARD SOME SORT OF MIDDLE POSITION FOR HIMSELF. WHEN TRIPOLI CONFERENCE PUT A "FREEZE" ON RELATIONS WITH EGYPT, SADAT OVERREACTED BY BREAKING RELATIONS. THE WAY SHOULD BE KEPT OPEN STILL FOR NEGOTIATIONS BUT NOT ON EGYPTIAN TERMS. KING SAID ALGERIAN AND SYRIAN POSITION SEEMED CLOSE IN THIS RESPECT.

2. ON THE SAHARA, BOUMEIENE MADE THESE POINTS:
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A) NO ALGERIANS ARE PARTICIPATING IN THE FIGHTING;

B) FRANCE WAS STILL REMEMBERED BADLY FROM PERIOD OF ALGERIAN REVOLT AND IF IT NOW BEGINS TO PARTICIPATE IN ATTACKS ON ALGERIAN SOIL (BOUMEDIENE ALSO IMPLIED ATTACKS HAD ALREADY TAKEN PLACE) THEN IT WILL BRING FURTHER DIFFICULTIES;

C) THERE ARE 100,000 SAHARAN REFUGEES IN ALGERIA. MOROCCO SHOULD RECOGNIZE THAT THEY MUST BE DEALT WITH, NOT IGNORED, AND THAT MOROCCO MUST COME TO TERMS WITH THOSE PEOPLE. THE REFUGEES WANTED TO FIGHT; HE COULD NOT ORDER THEM TO GO INTO THE SAHARA AND DIE. HE COULD NOT STOP THEM;

D) I ASKED WHETHER , AND THE KING REPLIED IN THE AFFIRMATIVE, THAT HE THOUGHT BOUMEDIENE HAD BEEN HINTING AT SOME SORT OF A NEGOTIATING OPTION.

3. JORDAN-ALGERIAN BILATERAL RELATIONS. KING SAID: A) BOUMEDIENE RECOGNIZED THAT A GOOD NUMBER

OF HIS SENIOR MILITARY HAD BEEN TRAINED IN JORDAN
AT THE TIME OF THE REVOLT AND HE ASKED FOR SOME
TRAINING ASSISTANCE. KING DID NOT SAY SO EXPLICITLY BUT I AM
CERTAIN HE WILL PROVIDE WHATEVER HE CAN;
B) THE TWO AGREED TO LOOK INTO MORE STUDENT AND
TEACHER EXCHANGES.

4. COMMENT: GIVEN WELL-KNOWN JORDANIAN DISTASTE
FOR ALGERIANS AS RESULT THEIR PRO-PLO STAND AND
ALGERIAN POSITION ON 1970 CIVIL WAR IN JORDAN, THE
KING'S REACTIONS ARE ON THE SURFACE SURPRISING.
HOWEVER GIVEN KING'S LONGSTANDING VIEW THAT JORDAN
CANNOT AFFORD NOT TO TALK WITH EVERYONE, PARTICULARLY
IN THE ARAB WORLD, AND HIS GROWING ANGST AT THE
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(AS HE SEES IT) FALTERING PEACE PROCESS AND INCREASING
POSSIBILITY OF A THREAT FROM SYRIA AND IRAQ, HE BELIEVES
FRIENDS OR INTERLOCUTERS IN THE REJECTIONIST CAMP
ARE BETTER TO HAVE THAN ENEMIES. WE SUSPECT ALSO,
GIVEN KING'S RATHER MASSIVE FRUSTRATION WITH SAUDI
AND GULF FINANCIAL SUPPORT THAT HE WILL HAVE A GO AT
SEEING WHAT HE CAN GET FROM THE ALGERIANS. HE
RECOGNIZED, WHEN I POINTED OUT TO HIM, THE
IRONY OF ACTUALLY HAVING TO DEPEND UPON THE CONSTANCY OF
BOUMEDIENE (AND POSSIBLY QADDHAFI)
FOR AID AND COMFORT IN THE FACE OF THE THREAT FROM IRAQ.
PICKERING

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